

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 061633Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2701
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T LAGOS 0159

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, UK, AL, SF, NI
SUBJECT: SIMPSON MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA

REF: LONDON 19830

SUMMARY: BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION (HICOM) LAGOS INFORMED
EMBASSY TODAY THAT SIMPSON MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA APPARENTLY
SUCCESSFUL. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL
SUPPOSEDLY TO BE MADE TODAY, JANUARY 6. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICER OF BRITISH HICOM CALLED ON POLITICAL COUNSELOR TODAY
TO "MAKE SURE" EMBASSY AWARE OF SIMPSON MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA.
(REFTEL). IN ESSENCE, OFFICIAL CONFIRMED EMBASSY LONDON'S
INFORMATION. MINEXTERNAL AFFAIRS SEEMINGLY UNAWARE OF MISSION.

2. SIMPSON, WHO LONG-TIME RESIDENT OF NIGERIA, IS
BUSINESSMAN DEALING IN SOME WAY WITH COMMUNICATIONS. BRITISH
HICOM SAYS HE IS CLOSE FRIEND OF HEAD OF STATE AND CHAIRMAN
RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) BRIGADIER MURTALA
MUHAMMED, APPARENTLY AS RESULT OF MUHAMMED'S LONG CONNECTION
WITH COMMUNICATIONS IN ARMY AND HIS TENURE AS COMMISSIONER
COMMUNICATIONS.

3. ACCORDING HICOM, SIMPSON ASKED BY MUHAMMED MAKE TRIP TO
SOUTH AFRICA TO SEEK SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL ANGOLA. THE

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MEESSAGE HE WAS TO CARRY TO SOUTH AFRICA WAS THAT FMG BEILEVED

MPLA ASSURANCES THAT ANGOLANS WOULD MOVE TO GET SOVIETS AND CUBANS OUT OF ANGOLA ONCE SOUTH AFRICANS LEFT. AFTER SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES WITHDRAWN, ACCORDING TO NIGERIANS, DISCUSSIONS ABOUT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT COULD BEGIN. HI COM SAID SIMPSON MADE TRIP AND RETURNED LAST WEEKEND. SIMPSON SAW VORSTER, WHO APPARENTLY ON VACATION, AND CONVINCED HIS TO PULL BACK SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS. ACCORDING SIMPSON, SOUTH AFRICANS ARE SUPPOSED TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENT TODAY ANNOUNCING WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES FROM ANGOLA EXCEPT FOR SMALL FORCE NEEDED TO PROTECT CUNENE RIVER DAM. HI COM HERE IS WAITING TO SEE IF ANNOUNCEMENT ACTUALLY MADE.

COMMENT: HUHAMMED, WHO GENERALLY IS CREDITED AS BEING AMONG THOSE WHO BROUGHT ABOUT ABRUPT NIGERIAN POLICY CHANGE AND RECOGNITION MPLA LAST NOVEMBER, APPEARS OUT OF CHARACTER IN SENDING EMISSARY TO PRETORIA. HE IS WELL KNOWN OPPONENT OF DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HOWEVER, IF SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD WITHDRAW AS RESULT OF NIGERIAN INITIATIVE, IT WOULD BE FEATHER IN HIS CAP WITH THOSE MEMBERS OF SMC WHO SEE DANGERS IN ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUED SOVIET INVOLVEMENT ON AFRICAN CONTINENT.

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